



Chişinău City hall

Anna was a young woman filled with excitement and anticipation. She had just received important news that she was eager to share with her beloved. News that led her on a journey of discovery about the rich cultural heritage of Moldovan traditional fine crafts and priceless artifacts.

Amid the hustle and bustle of Chisinau, Anna came upon the magnificent town hall building, a symbol of the city's resilience and history. Anna recalled a piece of information she had once come across. She was in front of the City Hall.

Now and Then

The City Hall building was erected at the end of the 19th century, as a new headquarters for the City Duma. The initiative was of the mayor of the city, Karol Schmidt he was actually the most longevive mayor of the city. He was the longest serving mayor of Chisinau, being the mayor of the capital for 26 years (from 1877 to 1903), with a special contribution to the modernization of the city. He successfully managed to turn provincial Chisinau into a modern European capital.

On the wall of the building she saw a memorial plaque on which a portrait is carved with the inscription "Alexandru Bernardazzi - chief architect of Chisinau between 1856 - 1878, honorary citizen of the city."

What a combination thought Anna, "Aleksander Osipovich Bernardazzi a Russian architect of the 19th century was working in Chisinau and was actually of Swiss-Italian origin." Actually it was nothing strange in that, considering that the mayor of that time was Karol Schmidt, a Bessarabian German¹ born into a German-Polish family.

¹ The Bessarabia Germans were a German ethnic group (formerly part of the Germans of Romania) who lived in Bessarabia (today part of the Republic of Moldova and south-western Ukraine) between 1814 and 1940.

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It was Karol Schmidt that took the initiative to build a new headquarters for the City Duma, on the site occupied by the fire station. The design was entrusted to the city architect Mitrofan Elladi of that time and the architect Aleksander Bernardazzi was invited to help him. The architecture of the building is in an eclectic spirit based on the architecture of the Italian Renaissance and is one of the few remaining structures from this era in the city.

Nowadays the City Hall building is still bustling with life and administers the city, but also serves as a hub of local commerce, housing various shops, including the "Din Inima" (eng. From the heart) shop which sells clothing designed by local artisans, as well as the "Fantezie" shop, which offers souvenirs and handmade crafts.

This building stands as a testament to the perseverance and creativity of the people of Chisinau, offering both a historical perspective and a glimpse into the modern spirit of the city.

„Come inside”, she heard in her ears, although nobody was around her. She felt the urge to buy something today that would be treasured for generations to come. Anna found the perfect dress, a timeless piece that she was now determined to pass down to her daughter later on. She asked the seller if she could wear it straight away. The girl behind the counter nodded.

Leaving the store, Anna felt that today would be a special day.

Stepping outside, she turned her gaze up and saw the tree of life embedded in the country brand logo. It has something in common with a tree she saw some time ago on an old carpet. This symbol of the tree was somehow different, but still she could see the similarities.

This was the country brand logo, the tree surrounded by symbols of the various sectors of the Moldovan economy, including winemaking, light industry, automotive and electronics, agriculture, infrastructure, and energy. Wine

From 1814 to 1842, 9,000 of them immigrated from the German areas Baden, Württemberg, Bavaria, some Prussian areas of modern-day Poland and Alsace, France, to the Russian governorate of Bessarabia at the Black Sea.

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glasses celebrate the pride of the nation's legendary wines, while fruits and vegetables remind us of the delicious taste of traditional cuisine. A basil flower symbolizes protection and pure love, while the letter M signifies the fertile land that nourishes the lively spirit of the Moldovan people.

Next to that “Tree of life” Anna noticed the letter “**i - Information**”, probably it was the Tourism Information Center, she supposed. She didn’t plan to be a tourist today, but that “Tree of life” was calling her, so she decided to enter and find out more about her roots, her ancestors...

Entering inside she was captured by the videos playing on a screen. Probably seeing her captured by all this, a young lady approached her (probably she was still a student, as far as Anna could estimate).

- *“Can I help you?, What would you like to visit in Moldova”,* asked the young lady;
- *“Mm, i would like to..., to know more about my past”,* said Anna after a while.

The questions were as simple as they were complicated. What did she want at that moment?

- *“I would like to follow in the footsteps of the women of the past”,* continued Anna;
- *“Nothing easier”,* answered the lady with a smile on her lips, while giving her a booklet on which it was written “Weaved Stories”

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That was it, exactly what she needed, was thinking Anna, while leafing through the booklet.

- *“It is a cultural route that collects places that are keeping the traditions alive, places where the culture is preserved, as well as places from where people are inspired for their artworks, culture, tradition and even benefits for their daily life”,* explained the young lady from the Info Center.

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Is tradition a value or a process?

“Though the world may change and traditions may evolve, a woman’s unwavering love, devotion to her home, family, and future remains unchanged.” With that thought in mind and the booklet in her hand Anna began her journey to the past.

Outside she noticed that the City hall building is like a symbol of change, even if she never saw it like that. A change that happens every day: the municipal officials are taking decisions that will influence the life of the townspeople; the shops light up the eyes of passers-by; and the Info Center will guide visitors to discover the culture of the country.

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